



MEDIA RELEASE

Sexual Battery Arrest

SANTA BARBARA, CA – August 21, 2012

Elpidio Garcia-Venegas, age 29, of Santa Barbara, was arrested for felony sexual battery.

On August 18, 2012, at 12:41 a.m., SBPD Officers Charlie Venable, Kody Cardana, and Blake Burgard responded to a call of a sexual battery that had just occurred at Tonic Nightclub at 634 State Street involving a male suspect who was being detained by security. Upon arrival they contacted the suspect, Elpidio Garcia-Venegas, and the victim, a 22-year old female foreign student who was very distraught over the incident.

Investigation indicates the following occurred. Inside the nightclub the victim was approached by Garcia-Venegas who offered to buy her a drink. The victim allowed Garcia-Venegas to buy her a beer and agreed to dance with him. Once on the dance floor Garcia-Venegas pressed the victim through the crowd and toward the raised DJ booth. The victim found herself unable to get away from Garcia-Venegas, due to his efforts to control her movement, the proximity of a wall, and the crowd on the dance floor. Garcia-Venegas then pressed the victim against the wall, pulled down a portion of the top of her dress, reached up her dress, and made continuous unwanted physical contact to her intimate body parts. The victim struggled to keep her clothing in place and cried out for help, however was apparently unheard due to the din of the music. The assault ended when a passing busboy, squeezing through the crowd, observed the two against the wall and noticed that the victim was crying and had a panicked look on her face. Realizing that something was wrong, the busboy shined his flashlight on Garcia-Venegas and asked him what was going on. Garcia-Venegas started to move toward the door but was restrained by the busboy who used his flashlight to alert security. Garcia-Venegas was escorted outside by security and detained until the officers arrived.

One of the investigating officers noted that at the location inside of the club where the incident took place, the dance floor was very crowded and the music was so loud that it was difficult to communicate. It was also dimly lit, with vision being further obscured by flashing strobes and fog from a fog machine. Given these factors the officer felt that the incident could have easily occurred, unnoticed by others. An observer would have had to have been standing on the dance floor, directly beside the involved parties, to realize what was happening.

The victim was transported to the Santa Barbara Police Department where she was put in contact with an advocate from the Santa Barbara Rape Crisis Center.

Garcia-Venegas declined to make a statement, other than to initially say that he had been "sexy dancing" with girls at the nightclub. Sexual battery, when committed against a victim that is unlawfully

restrained, is a felony. Garcia-Venegas was arrested on the aforementioned charge and booked into Santa Barbara County Jail with a bail amount of \$25,000.00.



Garcia-Venegas, Elpidio

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